

## **AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

1-24. (Canceled)

25. (New) A liquid matrix which is a liquid assistant for facilitating swallowing medicine comprising a water-soluble polymer, wherein the water-soluble polymer gellates under acidic conditions, and the breaking stress of the gel is about  $3.00 \times 10^2$  N/m<sup>2</sup> or more.

26. (New) The liquid matrix according to claim 25, wherein the breaking stress of the gel is  $2.00 \times 10^3$  N/m<sup>2</sup> or more.

27. (New) The liquid matrix according to claim 25, wherein the viscosity of the liquid matrix is  $3.0 \times 10^{-1}$  Pa·s or less.

28. (New) The liquid matrix according to claim 25, comprising insoluble salt releasing polyvalent metallic cation under acidic conditions.

29. (New) The liquid matrix according to claim 28, wherein the insoluble salt is alkaline earth metal salt of inorganic acid.

30. (New) The liquid matrix according to claim 25, wherein the water-soluble polymer has carboxyl group and/or sulfonic acid group in the chemical structure thereof.

31. (New) The liquid matrix according to claim 25, wherein the water-soluble polymer is alginate.

32. (New) The liquid matrix according to claim 25, wherein the water-soluble polymer is pectin.

33. (New) The liquid matrix according to claim 25, wherein the water-soluble polymer is combination of alginic acid and pectin.

34. (New) The liquid matrix according to claim 25, wherein the water-soluble polymer is a combination of alginate and pectin.

35. (New) The liquid matrix according to claim 25, wherein the water-soluble polymer is gellan gum.

36. (New) The liquid matrix according to claim 25, wherein the water-soluble polymer is combination of gellan gum and pectin.

37. (New) The liquid matrix according to claim 25, wherein the viscosity of the liquid matrix is about  $1.0 \times 10^{-1}$  Pa·s or less.

38. (New) An oral liquid preparation comprising the liquid matrix according to claim 25 and medicine.

39. (New) The oral liquid preparation according to claim 38, wherein the medicine has anti-*Helicobacter pylori* activity.

40. (New) The oral liquid preparation according to claim 38, wherein the medicine is at least one member selected from the group consisting of penicillin antibiotics, macrolide antibiotics, tetracycline antibiotics, cepham antibiotics, pyridonecarboxylic acid synthetic antibacterial agents and metronidazole.

41. (New) The oral liquid preparation according to claim 40, wherein the medicine is at least one member selected from the group consisting of amoxicillin, clarithromycin, roxithromycin, minocycline hydrochloride, cephaclor, cephalexin, ofloxacin, tosufloxacin tosylate, and levofloxacin.

42. (New) The oral liquid preparation according to claim 40, wherein the medicine is metronidazole.

43. (New) The oral liquid preparation according to claim 38, wherein the liquid matrix is gelled in the stomach thereby exhibiting sustained release of the medicine.

44. (New) The oral liquid preparation according to claim 38, wherein the medicine has therapeutic effect on stomach ulcer or duodenal ulcer.

45. (New) The oral liquid preparation according to claim 44, wherein the medicine having therapeutic effect on stomach ulcer or duodenal ulcer is of protection factor promoting type.

46. (New) The oral liquid preparation according to claim 45, wherein the medicine having an effect of promoting protection factor and a therapeutic effect on stomach ulcer or duodenal ulcer is prostaglandin.

47. (New) The oral liquid preparation according to claim 44, wherein the liquid matrix is gelled in the stomach thereby exhibiting sustained release of the medicine.

48. (New) A method of utilizing an aqueous solution of a water-soluble polymer gelling under acidic conditions as a component in a sustained-release oral liquid preparation.